

Message Text

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SUBJ: IRAN/AUSTRALIA ECONOMIC RELATIONS

1. MARCH 16-19 VISIT OF AUSTRALIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER CAIRNS AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE WRIEDT DID NOT RESULT IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF SPECIFIC JOINT VENTURES, LOANS, OR TRADE DEALS. JOINT STATEMENT AT END OF VISIT, DESCRIBED BY AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY COUNSELOR WITHEFORD AS "AS BLAND A DOCUMENT AS POSSIBLE," WAS RELEASED ON MARCH 20. SUBSTANTIVE PARAGRAPHS OF STATEMENT FOLLOW: "IN THE COURSE OF THE EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WHICH THE AUSTRALIAN MINISTERS HAD WITH THE MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES, THE MINISTER AGREED THAT THE VAST POTENTIALS AND EXTENSIVE RESOURCES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES OFFERED EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE UTILISATION OF THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES OF BOTH SIDES IN A MANNER THAT WOULD BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL.

IN THIS CONTEXT, THEY DISCUSSED AT LENGTH POSSIBILITIES FOR RAPID EXPANSION OF TRADE AND ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND ESPECIALLY
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JOINT VENTURES IN AUSTRALIA IN THE FIELDS OF AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY,

MINING AND ENERGY, PARTICULARLY URANIUM, IRON ORE AND BAUXITE AS WELL AS OTHER POSSIBLE FORMS OF INVESTMENT. IRAN AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL FACILITIES FOR THE JOINT VENTURES WHICH MAY BE AGREED UPON IN THESE AREAS.

SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD ON THE PURCHASE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AND URANIUM BY IRAN FROM AUSTRALIA. THE AUSTRALIAN MINISTERS AGREED THAT IRAN WOULD BE GIVEN ACCESS TO SUPPLIES OF URANIUM FROM AUSTRALIA UNDER FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS. IN THIS CONTEXT, IT WAS AGREED TO FOLLOW THESE DISCUSSIONS AT GREATER LENGTH BETWEEN THE RESPECTIVE AGENCIES OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS.

THE MINISTERS AGREED THAT A JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMISSION BE ESTABLISHED TO INCREASE AND INTENSIFY TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE COMMISSION WOULD MEET ANNUALLY IN EACH COUNTRY ALTERNATELY, AND WILL BE CONCERNED WITH A BROAD PROGRAMME OF CO-OPERATION IN ECONOMIC, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL FIELDS. JOINT SUB-COMMITTEES WILL BE FORMED TO CARRY OUT THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION IN SPECIFIC FIELDS OF INTEREST AND TO ENLIST THE ENERGIES AND SKILLS OF GOVERNMENTAL AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN FULFILLING THE AIMS OF THE COMMISSION. THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMISSION WILL BE HELD IN TEHRAN IN 1975 ON A DATE TO BE AGREED UPON IN DUE COURSE."

2. COMMENT: WITHEFORD SAID THAT IN EACH CASE SPECIFIC DEALS REMAIN TO BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN SUBSTANTIVE MINISTRIES OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS OR BETWEEN PRIVATE SECTOR FIRMS. THE EXTENT OF IRANIAN FINANCING FOR JOINT VENTURES WILL DEPEND ON THE SIZE OF THE GOI FOREIGN EXCHANGE SURPLUS AND OTHER DEMANDS FOR CAPITAL EXPORT AT THE TIME ANY AGREEMENTS ARE MADE. GIVEN IRAN'S CONTINUED CONCERN OVER ASSURING SOURCES OF SUPPLY FOR FOOD IMPORTS, AGRO-BUSINESS JOINT VENTURES SEEM MOST LIKELY TO BE STARTERS. AN IRAN/AUSTRALIA JOINT COMMISSION WILL BE ONLY ONE OF SOME 30 WHICH IRAN HAS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

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